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Title:
Statement for 'Time' Magazine (Aboriginals)

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STATEMENT FOR "TIME" MAGAZINE.

In Australia for many years, aborigine policies have been based upon apathy and misunderstanding. Aborigines for over 100 years were treated as a primitive stoneage people who needed protection in order to see that they were not exploited and who, in consequence, were subjected to legal restrictions by way of their race and treated to charitable handouts which made work houses of many reserve areas. More recently policies have become much more enlightened.

In many areas of Australia, legal restrictions upon aborigines by virtue of their race have been entirely removed and housing and training programmes undertaken with understanding of the value of the aborigine culture. Anthropologists have shown aborigines to have a high order of intelligence and to have a social structure far more developed than that of the European community, but one which is so differently oriented that it is difficult to adapt to what is essentially a materialist society.

Whilst new policies allowing aborigines to retain as much as possible of their culture, albeit to adapt to the society now around them, have recently been undertaken in South Australia and to some extent elsewhere in Australia, the financial capacity of the States is not sufficient for the kind of crash programme that is needed to overcome the misunderstanding of the past one hundred years. We do need large sums spent in training and to provide settled housing for aborigine people. The Commonwealth Government is the only Government which has the finance to provide such a programme and it was previously prohibited from doing so by the provisions of the Federal Constitution. The passing of the referendum could mean a new era in programmes for aborigines in Australia through the Commonwealth making grants to the States or specifically undertaking programmes itself throughout the country. What is more, the way is now clearly open for the

Commonwealth to pass legislation in ratification of the United Nations Convention on racial discrimination. So far the law prohibiting overt acts of racial discrimination is only in operation in South Australia.

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